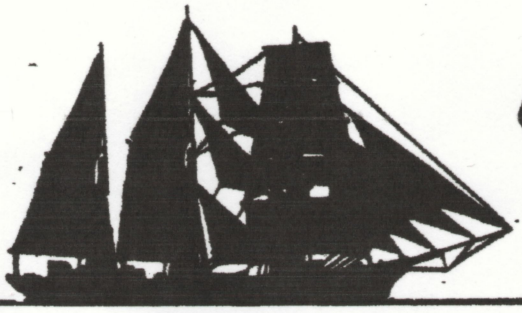


Searchlight: Ship to Shore News from R/V Regina Maris

Vol. 2, No 12
54°03'N 57°11'W Makkovik, Labrador
Sunday, July 17, 1977

Here is how Sharon Gwinn, chief scientist of the voyage, sees it:

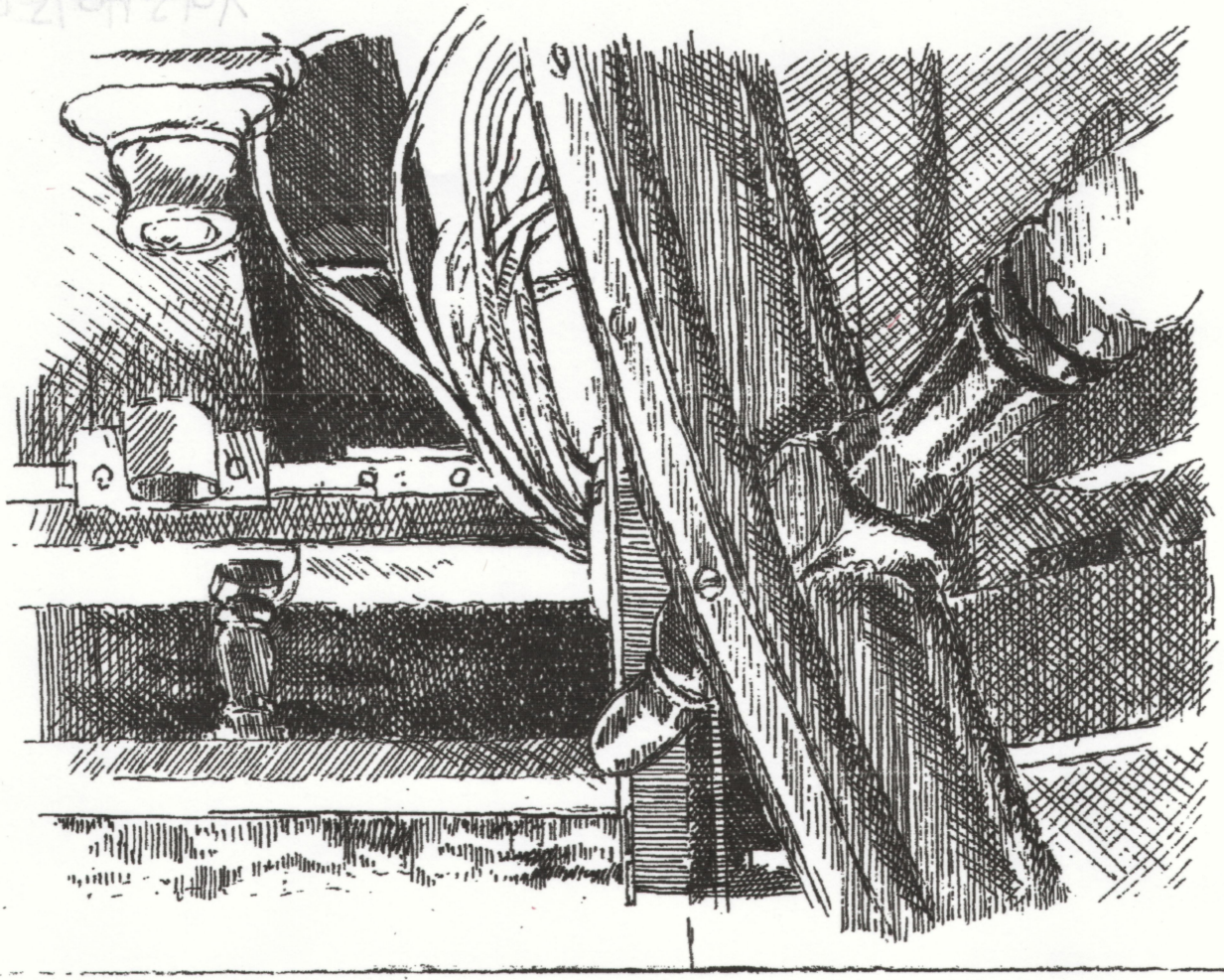
"Tonight we lie anchored in Emily Harbor, a properly snug cove on the inside of Brigg Harbor Island, just north of the entrance to Hamilton Inlet, latitude 54°33'N. The rigging has begun to moan her song under an increasing southeast wind accompanied by laughter on deck and the slow, Spanish guitar in the main cabin. A falling barometer promises a change in the weather and something with which to fill our sails. It will be welcomed, judging from the loud enthusiasm that goes with sail handling aboard *Regina*.

"The past week has been absolutely tropical, with a great deal of barefoot, T-shirt weather, very little wind, a deep blue, calm sea, and a clear, sharp horizon under artfully arranged cloud formations with only a couple of days of morning and evening fog. Our path has, for the most part, followed closely to shore, among the islands of beige and reddish rock capped with spongy carpets of emerald green. Icebergs are now commonplace, and everyone has learned helmsmanship well enough to steer around them while the rest of the crew snap pictures.

"Humpback whales have not been as numerous as last week, but their brethren have more than made up the difference. In the evening, after leaving St. Anthony (Tuesday), we were treated to a dolphin show (about 20 white beaked dolphins, including at least 3 youngsters). They leaped and frolicked on the edge of a bait school with shearwaters wheeling above. In the relatively shallow water we've encountered many minkes, mysterious little whales that are usually seen surfacing only 2 or 3 times before they disappear. But the week's grand prize most certainly goes to Wednesdays family of killer whales. Obviously unafraid of *Reginas* noisy bulk, they gave us a long, close look at their magnificence. And, for the bird lovers, today we passed the Herring Islands, covered with nesting black backed gulls, puffins, murres and razor bills. The trophic basis for all this life, the plankton, changes daily and we keep careful track of the relative abundance of its diverse forms.

"Classes continue to hold their moments of enlightenment, evidenced by skilled performance on the first marine mammals quiz and much enthusiasm for taking navigational sights. We are now further north than most of us have ever been, and the spirit of adventure just keeps climbing. Now we go to meet this new tailwind, pushing offshore and down to Nain across poorly charted waters and hopefully, on to a fjord or two before turning back South to return to St. Anthony."

Sharon Gwinn
aboard *Regina Maris*



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